

Washington, DC—Yesterday, Congressman Olver voted in favor of the Conference Report making Appropriations for Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-Science and Transportation for Fiscal Year 2012.

Speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives, Congressman Olver said the following:

As ranking member on the Transportation and Housing subcommittee, I first would like to thank Chairman Latham for working openly with me throughout the process and congratulate him on bringing his first conference report to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a perfect bill and there are elements that I disagree with. In particular, I wish CDBG funding was closer to last year's levels and I am disappointed that the bill does not provide funding for the High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail program. Both of these programs are in high demand and would contribute significant value to our communities if funded at desirable levels.

However, this bill is a reasonable compromise that has improved significantly since the THUD portion was marked-up in subcommittee. Funding for our transportation infrastructure programs is kept stable, allowing FAA to continue modernization of our air traffic control system, providing FHWA with funds needed to maintain our highway network, and providing FTA with sufficient funding to continue investments to expand our regional transit systems.

I am particularly pleased that the bill provides \$1.4 billion for Amtrak and removes destructive language that would have halted service along 26 routes in 19 states. Annual ridership on these routes has increased by 6.5% and a Congressionally authorized process is already under way to reduce the operating cost of these services.

In addition, the bill provides \$1.66 billion for the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief program in order to eliminate the backlog of repairs needed as a result of hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters and \$400 million for emergency CDBG funds. I believe we have a responsibility to provide assistance to States that have endured unanticipated disasters without conditioning the support on cuts to other programs.

Last, I am pleased that this bill reinstates HUD's Housing Counseling program by providing \$45 million. With foreclosure rates remaining high, the counseling services provided by this program continue to be vital for families who are struggling in the current economy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a respectable product of a bipartisan process and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The Conference Report passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 298-121. The legislation includes the following funding levels for key programs:

- **USDA Disaster Relief for Farmers:** \$367 million
- **SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program):** \$80.4 billion
- **WIC (Women, Infants, Children):** \$6.6 billion, keeps approximately 700,000 women, infants and children in the program
- **FDA (Food and Drug Administration):** \$2.5 billion, allows continued implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- **Emergency Relief:** \$1.66 billion to repair backlog of road, highway and bridge projects in 37 States that were damaged by natural disasters.
- **AMTRAK:** \$1.418 billion. Deletes onerous House language that eliminated service on 26 short-distance routes, affecting 19 States and more than 9 million passengers.

- **National Infrastructure Investment (TIGER Grants):** \$500 million for national and regional transportation projects. (Note: high speed rail is eligible for TIGER funding)

- **Highway Funding:** \$39.8 billion - \$12.1B more than the House draft bill and consistent with the annual funding levels assumed in the surface transportation extension act.

- **Transit Formula Funding:** \$8.36 billion - \$2.5 billion more than the House bill and consistent with the funding levels assumed in the surface transportation extension act.
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- **Capital Investment Grants:** \$1.955 billion - Requires 60 percent New Start share for full funding grant agreements instead of House proposed 50 percent Federal share.

- **Housing Counseling Assistance:** \$45 Million - Restores funds to local non-profits for reverse mortgage, rental, home pre-purchase and foreclosure prevention counseling.

- **Interagency Council on Homelessness:** \$3.3 Million - We restored the USICH in subcommittee- the Chairman's mark zeroed it out. The increase funds permanent staff.

- **Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH):** \$75 Million - VASH provides long-term housing to homeless veterans. This is an increase of \$25 million over FY 2011.

- **Community Development Block Grants - Emergency:** \$400 Million (\$100 million in emergency funding) will be available for communities' hardest-hit by disasters in 2011.